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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# Intelligence Memorandum

SOUTH ARABIAN DISSIDENT AND FEDERAL ARMED FORCES

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
9 March 1967

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

South Arabian Dissident and Federal Armed Forces

Summary

In anticipation of the independence of South Arabia in 1968, the Adeni dissidents in Yemen are preparing a "Liberation Army" of South Arabian tribesmen. This army is being trained at Egyptian army camps in conventional and guerrilla warfare for use as a disciplined commando-type unit against the Federal Army. The Federal Army, which consists of 5,000 British-trained tribesmen, will become the security force of South Arabia after the British evacuation.

The new "Liberation Army" is intended to secure South Arabia for the dissidents, who will probably form a government-in-exile, but the army's ultimate effectiveness will depend upon whether it remains loyal to the political group which formed it or whether it ultimately aligns itself with its military opponent, the Federal Army. Both forces, composed of the same type of hill tribesmen, share a contempt for the urban politicians who will dominate any independent government.

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1. The Federation of South Arabia is scheduled to become independent on 1 January 1968. The British will not only have withdrawn their forces from the Federation by that date but will also cancel present security guarantees to the existing protectorates.

2. Security responsibility for the new state, as envisioned by the British, will devolve upon the present Federal Army, a well-trained, 5,000-man force of South Arabian tribesmen, plus local Federal Guard units in each state. The British will assist this army with training, weapons, and financial credits, even attempting in the short time left to set up an embryonic air force.

3. South Arabian dissidents, particularly those groups established or financed by Egypt, will not accept any British-sponsored independent government unless they can control it. This has so far proved unacceptable to the British and the pro-British political leaders in the Federation.

4. It thus seems likely that, as the British evacuate and anarchy increases, the South Arabian dissidents, located a short distance across the border in Yemen, will attempt to set up a government-in-exile. They have already begun to organize and train an army to seize power in the resulting political vacuum.

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7. The groups trained by Egypt have now been surfaced. In late February and early March between 350 and 400 men were seen in Yemen, wearing Egyptian-type uniforms and berets, with two arm patches--one displaying FLOSY in Arabic and the other, "Liberation Army."

8. There are other reports indicating that part of the organization may be intended as a clandestine infiltration group. The entire operation appears to be intimately connected with the Egyptians' Operation SALAH AL-DIN, the name for the training and organizing of terrorism against Aden. However, the exact relationship between the two is not clear.

9. Whatever the ultimate use of the new force, it has not yet shown any signs of possessing a capability with armor and heavy weapons. The emphasis thus far appears to be on building a commando-type force, intended to carry out partisan warfare.

10. To date, Egyptian training of South Arabian dissidents of all types has proved spotty. The total number trained has been estimated at 7,000, but half this figure probably is more realistic. Of these, 1,500 or so who were interested primarily in a handout of cash and guns, have now disappeared into the hills. Most of the remaining "trainees" are tied by some sort of loyalty to the NLF.

11. Egypt has been the prime organizer of all dissident groups in South Arabia. The USSR and Communist China have made offers of military aid, but

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no significant quantity of aid has been accepted by any group. Egyptian control of Yemen allows Cairo to channel arms shipments, perhaps sometimes intended by a bloc donor for one recipient, to whatever recipient the Egyptians choose.

12. The most important question with respect to the new army will be its dependability. South Arabian tribesmen tend to have extremely divided loyalties, often based on clan affiliations. It may be difficult to find leaders whom the troops can admire not only as warriors but as being above tribal allegiances. The need for strong leadership will be increasingly important as the central government of South Arabia disintegrates during the evacuation and as practical British support is withdrawn from the present tribal leaders. The South Arabian Federal Army faces the same problem and neither it nor the dissident army appears to have solved it.

13. If the Liberation Army proves dependable and able, it will still face formidable problems posed by the terrain and political system of South Arabia. It has been estimated that with adequate air support the best that an Egyptian military thrust might accomplish would be the occupation of Aden and the state of Lahij, which is located between Aden and the Yemen border (see map). Maintaining lines of communication might prove to be costly unless the hinterland was abandoned and Aden was supplied by sea and air. It appears certain that a South Arabian "Liberation Army," brought to the highest possible state of readiness, would not accomplish more. Furthermore, even if this army became the new garrison of Aden, it would probably be dissolved in a short time by the Adeni politicians. Most of the Liberation Army troops come from the same tribal stock as the Federal Army they would be opposing. All of them are contemptuous of the Adeni townsmen, the type now controlling FLOSY.

14. The chief alternative is that the Liberation Army might be used to strike directly at the

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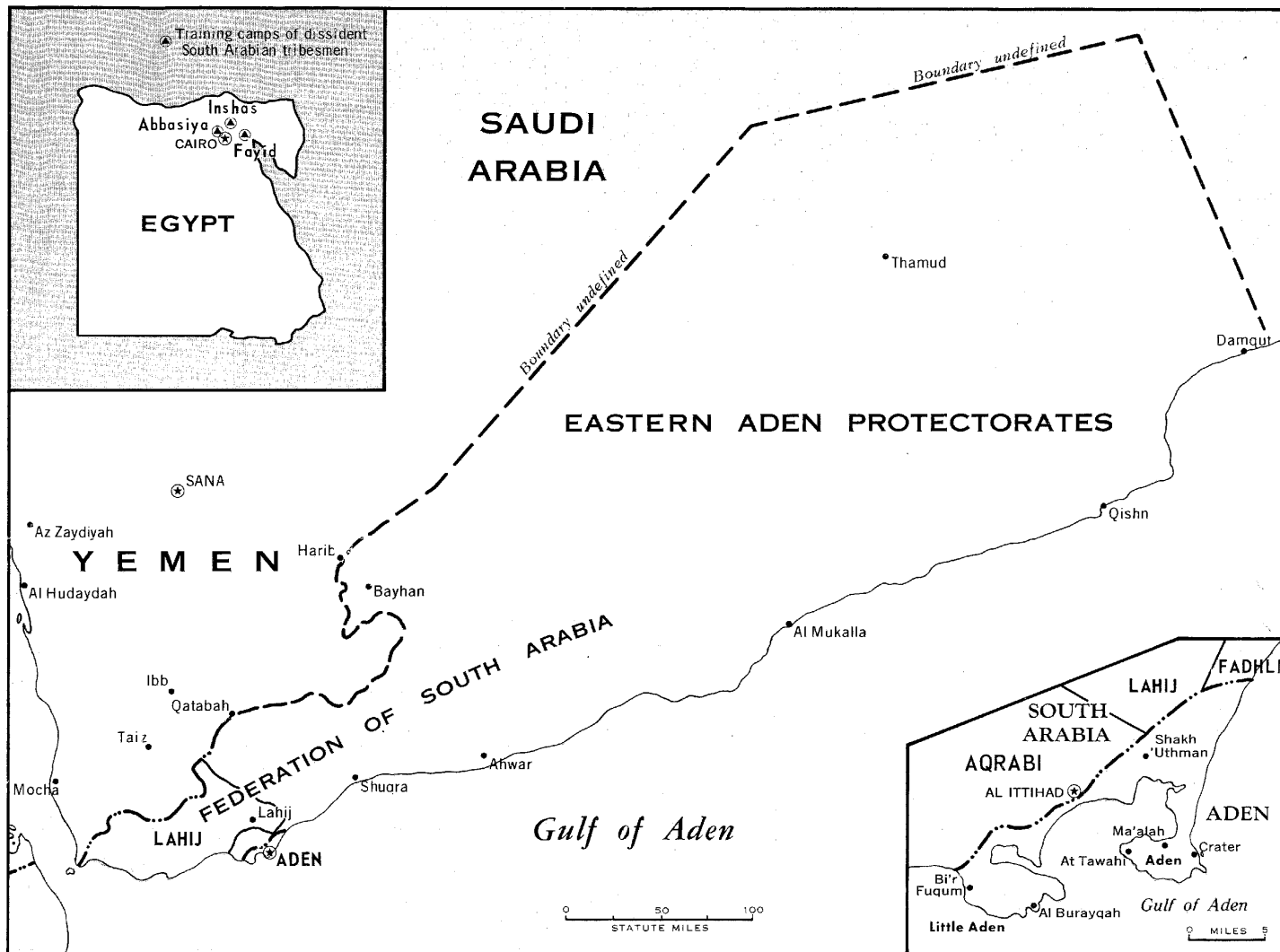
Federal Army, gaining advantage by Egyptian air support. If the Federal Army were destroyed as an effective military unit, the future occupiers of Aden would then have to face primarily isolated groups of tribal forces which might try to seize Aden for loot and guns. These would not prove so formidable, and some sort of mercenary army might be maintained to protect Aden. The picture is not a bright one, however, for the future leaders on either side of South Arabian affairs.

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